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"The Attack on America has Woken a Sleeping Giant"

by Congressman Allen Boyd

On September 11th our great nation suffered its greatest tragedy of a single day since the Civil War. I join all other Americans who are shocked and outraged by the terrorist hijackings and attacks on the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon.

With this attack, the United States has entered a new era. We have been thrust into a new type of conflict and face an implacable enemy who will not hesitate to destroy innocent life.

CIA Director George Tenet has said in testimony before Congress that terrorist attacks are imminent. It is impossible to predict with certainty where or when terrorists might strike again. But this incomprehensible tragedy is a terrible reminder that we must take the threat of terrorism seriously.

Let there be no mistake ?? the U.S. Government will investigate, pursue, and seek convictions of the criminals who were behind this cowardly attack. These terrorist attacks were truly acts of war, and we will respond forcefully and appropriately. The United States will take action against the terrorists and punish the governments that support and harbor such criminals.

We must pull together as a country to grieve for all those we have lost, to care for all those who were injured and support all those families who have been affected by this tragedy. We must pull together as one people to protect our nation and our way of life.

America must lead the civilized world in a relentless campaign to root out and defeat terrorists and terrorist states. As we mourn the tragic loss of life, the United States must remain resolute. Our friends and our enemies alike must be made to understand that we will not be deterred from the defense of our interests nor shrink from our responsibilities.

This tragedy calls for the certain and severe punishment of those responsible and requires a commitment by Americans to address our vulnerabilities. We must understand that the struggle now upon us may be long and difficult. Yet, America has always prevailed against her enemies and will do so again.

Those of us who have the honor of serving our Nation in these hallowed halls of Congress have a very difficult job to carry out. We must always maintain the magnificence of our Constitution while moving forward with the legislative challenge of balancing the need for additional security versus our God given rights and the rule of law. I believe that our Government has never before been faced with a larger challenge than the preservation of the ideals of this Nation, while still addressing the future.

But that is not enough. We must resolve to fight back against these insane acts by committing the country's full resources in an aggressive effort to determine who is responsible, to see that justice is done, and to do everything possible to deter such acts in the future. As former Navy Secretary Richard Danzig pointed out, our memory is long and our reach is longer.

I extend my deepest sympathies to the families of the victims, while expressing my gratitude to all of the emergency and law enforcement personnel and other volunteers, many of whom have lost their lives to help with our emergency response efforts.